



Arkansas Continuity
Of Operations Program

ACOOP News

March 27
Issue 5 Volume 1

It is officially spring time in Arkansas, and with that comes the possibility of severe weather. Just over a year ago on February 5, 2008, we experienced a tornado that ripped through our state and devastated property, homes, and lives. Preparing your family for these events is especially important. In this issue of ACOOP News, we will focus on tornadoes, how they are formed, and what you should do before, during, and after a tornado impacts your area.

Tornadoes

Tornadoes are nature's most violent storms. Spawned from powerful thunderstorms, tornadoes can cause fatalities and devastate neighborhoods in seconds. A tornado appears as a rotating, funnel-shaped cloud that extends from a thunderstorm to the ground with whirling winds that can reach 300 miles per hour. Damage paths can be in excess of one mile wide and 50 miles long. Every state is at some risk from this hazard.

Some tornadoes are clearly visible, while rain or nearby low-hanging clouds obscure others. Occasionally, tornadoes develop so rapidly that little, if any, advance warning is possible.

Before a tornado hits, the wind may die down and the air may become very still. A cloud of debris can mark the location of a tornado even if a funnel is not visible. Tornadoes generally occur near the trailing edge of a thunderstorm. It is not uncommon to see clear, sunlit skies behind a tornado.

The following are facts about tornadoes:

- They may strike quickly, with little or no warning.
- They may appear nearly transparent until dust and debris are picked up or a cloud forms in the funnel.
- The average tornado moves southwest to northeast, but tornadoes have been known to move in any direction.
- The average forward speed of a tornado is 30 mph, but may vary from stationary to 70 mph.
- Tornadoes can accompany tropical storms and hurricanes as they move onto land.
- Waterspouts are tornadoes that form over water.
- Tornadoes are most frequently reported east of the Rocky Mountains during spring and summer months.
- Peak tornado season in the southern states is March through May; in the northern states, it is late spring through early summer.
- Tornadoes are most likely to occur between 3 p.m. and 9 p.m., but can occur at any time.

Source: <http://www.fema.gov/hazard/tornado/index.shtm>

Know Your Tornado Terms

Familiarize yourself with these terms to help identify a tornado hazard:

- **Tornado Watch**
Tornadoes are possible. Remain alert for approaching storms. Watch the sky and stay tuned to NOAA Weather Radio, commercial radio, or television for information.
- **Tornado Warning**
A tornado has been sighted or indicated by weather radar. Take shelter immediately.

Source: http://www.fema.gov/hazard/tornado/to_terms.shtm

What to do Before a Tornado

Be alert to changing weather conditions.

- Listen to NOAA Weather Radio or to commercial radio or television newscasts for the latest information.
- Look for approaching storms
- Look for the following danger signs:
 - Dark, often greenish sky
 - Large hail
 - A large, dark, low-lying cloud (particularly if rotating)
 - Loud roar, similar to a freight train.

If you see approaching storms or any of the danger signs, be prepared to take shelter immediately.

Source: http://www.fema.gov/hazard/tornado/to_before.shtm

What to Do During a Tornado

If you are under a tornado WARNING, seek shelter immediately!

If you are in:	Then:
A structure (e.g. residence, small building, school, nursing home, hospital, factory, shopping center, high-rise building)	Go to a pre-designated shelter area such as a safe room, basement, storm cellar, or the lowest building level. If there is no basement, go to the center of an interior room on the lowest level (closet, interior hallway) away from corners, windows, doors, and outside walls. Put as many walls as possible between you and the outside. Get under a sturdy table and use your arms to protect your head and neck. Do not open windows.
A vehicle, trailer, or mobile home	Get out immediately and go to the lowest floor of a sturdy, nearby building or a storm shelter. Mobile homes, even if tied down, offer little protection from tornadoes.

The outside with no shelter	<p>Lie flat in a nearby ditch or depression and cover your head with your hands. Be aware of potential flooding.</p> <p>Do not get under an overpass or bridge. You are safer in a low, flat location.</p> <p>Never try to outrun a tornado in urban or congested areas in a car or truck. Instead, leave the vehicle immediately for safe shelter.</p> <p>Watch out for flying debris. Flying debris from tornadoes causes most fatalities and injuries.</p>
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Source: http://www.fema.gov/hazard/tornado/to_during.shtm

Ensure Your Safety After a Disaster

Find out how to care for your safety after a disaster.

Your first concern after a disaster is your family's health and safety. You need to consider possible safety issues and monitor family health and well-being.

Aiding the Injured

Check for injuries. Do not attempt to move seriously injured persons unless they are in immediate danger of death or further injury. If you must move an unconscious person, first stabilize the neck and back, then call for help immediately.

- If the victim is not breathing, carefully position the victim for artificial respiration, clear the airway, and commence mouth-to-mouth resuscitation.
- Maintain body temperature with blankets. Be sure the victim does not become overheated.
- Never try to feed liquids to an unconscious person.

Health

- Be aware of exhaustion. Don't try to do too much at once. Set priorities and pace yourself. Get enough rest.
- Drink plenty of clean water, eat well, and wear sturdy work boots and gloves.
- Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and clean water often when working in debris.

Safety Issues

- Be aware of new safety issues created by the disaster. Watch for washed out roads, contaminated buildings, contaminated water, gas leaks, broken glass, damaged electrical wiring, and slippery floors.
- Inform local authorities about health and safety issues, including chemical spills, downed power lines, washed out roads, smoldering insulation, and dead animals.

Source: <http://www.fema.gov/rebuild/recover/health.shtm>

Do you have an idea for topic for ACOOP News? Let us know!

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Arkansas Continuity of Operations Program Training Schedule

COOP New User

Learn the components of building continuity of operations plans and how to use the Living Disaster Recovery Planning System (LDRPS).

April 8, 2009 8:30-12:00

Pandemic Flu – facts, planning, & exercises

A good class for planners & staff! Learn about the types of flu, why pandemic flu is a threat and how we can prepare.

March 31, 2009 8:30-12:00
April 28, 2009 8:30-12:00

COOP Refresher

Maybe it has been a while since you worked with your plan or you just have questions about COOP, bring them and catch up on your planning.

April 22, 2009 8:30-12:00

COOP Workshop

Need an afternoon to work on your COOP plan with some guidance? Workshops are held after every class session in the DIS training room.

March 31, 2009 1:00-4:00
April 8, 2009 1:00-4:00
April 22, 2009 1:00-4:00
April 28, 2009 1:00-4:00

To register or ask about the location of these classes contact Amber Styles-Emberson:
amber.styles-emberson@arkansas.gov or 501-683-0502.